

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

Tuesday, October 29. 1706.

In pursuing this Article of a National Peace between the two Kingdoms, methinks nothing should more illustrate it to our Thoughts, than the Memories of the Animosities that have been between the two Nations—With what Inveteracy and unusual Cruelty carried on! With what mutual Barbarisms, cruel and unjust Executions! As in Case of brave *Wallis*, and the barbarous and dishonourable Murther of the Sons of the *Scots* Governor of *Berwick*; only because he would not basely deliver up his Charge, which he defended like a Man of Honour, the worst Blot in the Reign of *another wise most glorious Prince*, Edward III.

The Nations were always terrible, and seldom made War like other People, and you seldom found a Battle between them, but there was more Blood-shed than in other Nations; the radicated Aversion pro-

ceeded from the frequent Excursions and Surprizes between them on the Frontiers, where the very Hatred continues to this Hour, and will never but by a Union be removed, not very easily with it.

In the frequent Invasions on either side, the Ravages, Burnings, and Desolations on either hand were prodigious, and no wonder the miserable Country People on each side entertain'd implacable Aversions one to another, no wonder they were irreconcilably provok'd, no wonder it was handed down in the Blood; for every Age found renew'd Occasion to nourish the Opinon, and in their own Experience felt the Reason of the Principle, they had receiv'd from their Fathers.

This seems very plainly demonstrated from this, that the farther North you go in *England*, the more Hatred and the deeper rooted

rooted you find in the People against the *Scots*, and the like in *Scotland* against the *English*, the Reason is evident.

The Wars between the Kingdoms generally began with mutual Inroads and furious Excursions on both sides, in which sometimes the Grand Armies of *England* having been employ'd abroad, the *Scots* have push'd into *England* even to the Banks of *Trent*; and on the other hand the *English* on either side almost to the Gates of *Edinburgh*, in all these Cases the poor Country People have always been undone, their Houses destroy'd, their Goods plunder'd, the Men murmur'd, the Women abus'd, and all the common and uncommon Cruelties of Invaders been exercised upon them to their Ruin and Destruction, and this before the Armies could be ready to defend them or get into the Field; when these were drawn together, then indeed the Scene alter'd a little, from Plunder to Blood, and from Robbing to Fighting.

Never was War carried on with more Fury on either hand, never more Fighting, never more Blood, than in the Wars between these two furious Nations! No wonder Her Majesty, sensible of these things, counts it the Glory of her Reign to have this Work finished in her Time, to have an End put to *Northern* Flames, a Stop to infinite Ravages and Desolations, to fix a Period to a Flood of Desolation, that has now been of above a thousand Years standing, to stop for ever a *Northern Vesuvius*, which on every occasion was always bursting out Fire, and mutually destroying both Nations.

I think, Historians make mention of no less than 150 several Invasions and Eruptions of Armies on either side, on the Account of the very Spirit between the two Nations. What Seas of Blood have been spilt in such a long Series of Mischiefs? What incredible Miseries have both the Nations suffer'd? —— And what remaining Use is all this of to both Kingdoms? —— To encline them at last to put a Stop to such ruinous and destructive Doings?

What is the looking back upon these things for, but to make both Nations grow wiser at the Expence of their Fathers, and not at their own; to put a Stop to the

Stream of Blood for ever, and make Property as safe on the Borders, as in the Center of the Kingdom.

This is the lasting and solid Peace Her Majesty makes mention of in her Letter, and without doubt it is for the mutual Advantage of the Nation; and I must confess, it is a most astonishing thing to me to imagine, that any body can be against it, that any body on either side should suggest Dangers, and raise imaginary Fears against a Peace, which in its Nature is a Death to all these Plagues, and which they have Opportunity to make on either side, as safe as they can desire.

A Peace will put a speedy End to all these things, a lasting solid Peace will put a lasting solid Period to them, and nothing but our own private Animosities can then hurt us; of which I have only this to say, I hope, the Harms, we mutually suffer by them, will at last teach us to be wiser, and like Nations abroad that fight till they are weary of the War, then desire Peace of course; so when we have wearied our selves with Contention, and learnt from the solid Mischief, we feel by it, the fatal Consequences to us all; We shall most certainly at last joy in the mutual Contrivance of Peace, and strive together to put an End to all our own Broils; that our Enemies may no more laugh at us, or our Posterity say, they are less happy, because their Fathers were Fools.

If a Cessation of all those black Days, our Fathers felt in these Parts, shall come; if an End shall be put to all these terrible things by a Peace, blessed will these Days be call'd to the End of the World, and blessed will be the Union now to be made, which shall lay a lasting and solid Foundation for such a Peace.

Ages to come shall solemnize the Year of Peace, in which this happen'd, and the QUEEN shall be made the Glory of her Age, in the Memory of Her Majesty's Zeal, for the real Felicity of all her People, a thing so rare in *England*, that till the Revolution, we have rather heard it talk'd of, than seen the Fruits of it in any of our Monarchs.

Her Majesty has declar'd, the Union will be a solid and lasting Foundation to both King-

Kingdoms ; really, Gentlemen, never two Nations wanted Peace more than these, never two Nations have suffer'd more by one another than these, never two Nations could easier make Peace together, *than ever differ'd so extravagantly*, than these, never two Nations had such Reasons to make Peace, or could make such Use of Peace as these, and never were two Na-

tions more inexcusable in omitting the Opportunity of Peace, than these !

— And yet I must add, never were two Nations so hard to be persuaded, so diffident of one another, so fearful in the contriving, so slow in proceeding, and so seemingly backward in making a Peace, as these ; and that not so much for real Fear of one another, as loth one should gain by the other.

MISCELLANEA.

MY last gave you the Players Answer to the Charge laid against them about vicious and immoral Plays, *Viz.* — That the Last of the Town is the Guide of their Work ; that they must write to please, or they will act in vain ; that like the Shop-keeper, they must have such Goods as will please their Chapmen, or they had as good shut up, and leave off, and the like ; and that if we expect them to represent nothing but dull Virtue, we must speak in their Behalf to the Government to take them into their Service, that they may act at the publick Charge, &c.

And really I am for complying with their Request, upon Condition they will be confin'd to Virtue and Modesty in every thing they present ; that the Stage (*if such a thing is possible*) may be a School of Honour, a Guide to Civility, an Instructor of Virtue, and an Introduction to good Manners ; that the Humour, Wit and Addresses shown there, may prepare young Minds to generous Actions, infuse Heroick Principles, and inspire Men with just Thoughts — — That Vice, immodest and immoral Actions may always receive their due Censure, and the World may be taught there to treat them with Contempt — — That our Youth may be prompted to Virtue, and brought in Love with a Life of Regularity, as what in its own Nature best suits the Being of a Man, and the Character of a Man of Honour — — That Lewdness of Speech, that Sodomy of the Tongue, and of Gesture, that Degeneracy even of ill Manners, shall be as odious to general Acceptation, as it is

unmanly in its Nature ; that blaspheming the Name of their Maker shall be a general Abomination, and every Man, that hears it, shall take himself to be affronted in the Assault upon his Master ; that he that swears in Company, shall be kick'd out of Company, the Drunkard be turn'd to his Brother Swine, and always treated like a Beast.

In short, that Vice shall grow out of Fashion, and no Man be in the Mode that wears it ; that general Reformation shall spread the Streets, and, *Miraculous Turn !* shall begin at the Theater.

In the Prospect of these Conditions, I would joyn in an humble Address to the Parliament, tho' it would be a strange One, to settle a general Fund for the Encouragement of Learning and good Manners, by establishing a Company of Players — — And in this Case, I should esteem it an extraordinary publick Good, and a Contribution of Charity.

But now it remains to examine, whether the Allegations, in Behalf of the Play-house, are of Force or no ? And I must confess there is too much in it, tho' not so much as some may conclude.

But let me say one thing, Gentlemen and Ladies, you whose Encouragement is the Support of the Plays, and who in your Company draw Crowds hither, sometimes to admire Plays, and sometimes yourselves — — Is it true, that the Ladies are not pleas'd, if they are not oblig'd sometimes to put their Masks on ; and that the more Trials of Skill there are, who blushes soonest,

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